

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for isolating molecules, cells and other particles which are specifically bound to a large particle comprising:

incubating a sample with at least one set of large-capturing particles each of which is ~~are~~ able to specifically bind/capture a large number of molecules, cells or other particles contained in the sample, said large-capturing particles being larger than 200 μ m;

analyzing the large-capturing particles mixed with the sample; ~~and~~

sorting, from each other, the large-capturing particles containing specifically bound molecules, cells or other particles; and

detaching the molecules, cells or other sample particles of interest from the larger-capturing particles after they are sorted.

2. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein said large-capturing particles may be of different sizes, materials, densities, and/or shapes.

3. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein different types of

molecules, cells or other particles can be bound to the large-capturing particles.

4. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the large-capturing particles are covered with or bound to specific antibodies, parts of antibodies, oligonucleotides or other types of probes specific for the binding of the molecules, cells and other particles of interest.

5. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the sample is simultaneously or sequentially incubated with two or more different sets of large-capturing particles for the isolation/depletion of two or more different types of molecules, cells or other particles from the sample.

6. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein each set of large-capturing particles can specifically bind one, two or more different types of molecules, cells or other particles from the sample.

7. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the incubation of the sample with the large-capturing particles is performed by:

(A) directly mixing the large-capturing particles with the sample containing the molecules, cells or other particles of interest;

(B) passing the sample one or more times through one or more chambers containing the large-capturing particles; or

(C) passing the large-capturing particles one or more times through

the sample containing the molecules, cells or other particles of interest.

8. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ a distinction between the large-capturing particles bound to the molecules, cells or other sample particles is based on their scatter, fluorescence or combined scatter and fluorescence properties.

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the large-capturing particles bound to molecules, cells or other sample particles are sorted into Petri dishes or microtiter plates.

10. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein different sample volumes and amounts of large-capturing particles can be used in combination.

11. (canceled)

12. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the molecules are selected from the group consisting of DNA, mRNA, proteins, and peptides.

13. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the other particles are selected from the group consisting of chromosomes, mitochondria, zymogen granules, and cell membranes.

14. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the large particle is selected from the group consisting of latex, polystyrene, methacrylate, activated-aldehydes, polyethyleneglycol, and acrolein.

Application No. 09/920,727
Reply dated September 7, 2004
Response to Office Action dated May 5, 2004

15. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the large-capturing particles bound to molecules, cells or other sample particles are sorted into receptacles.